

System focus

Programs ♦ WorkSource Operations ♦ Technical Assistance

Workforce & Career Development Division

Director's Corner

This month's column comes from Keoni Fontaine, Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and WCDD's Director of Lean Innovation & Organizational Change:

In my first month with WCDD, I facilitated conversations around each region's A3 activities, and teaching a facilitation tool called an Affinity Diagram that can be shared with WorkSource office staff. Each visit began with a quick tour of the office where we were meeting and some discussions with front line staff. I was impressed by everyone's passion for serving our customers!

In each of the four meetings, regional directors, administrators and some supervisors worked together to identify A3 activities that support our division's four goals: Workplace Culture, Technology Solutions, Professional Development, and Integrated Service Delivery. The conversations were collaborative, engaging, respectful, and productive. Everyone agreed at the end of each meeting that the level of work they accomplished in a short amount of time was phenomenal! We could see continuity in each group's vision of a future state and created a sense of togetherness.

I think everyone will be surprised by the number of activities and categories that are similar between all of the regions. My hope is that this open up dialogue all around the state to identify and share best practices. Each region may be different, but all share a similar vision of the future state.

Opportunity Act: Stay Informed and Help Guide the System

Governor Inslee gave the workforce system a clear North Star to follow as we implement the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA, also called Opportunity Act) in Washington: **Help more people find jobs, help more employers close skill gaps, and work together as a unified team.** You, the experts in the field, know best how to make it happen. Please keep sending us your insights, advice, and good ideas to help our system achieve those goals by e-mailing us at TechnicalFAQ@esd.wa.gov.

System partners are reminded and encouraged to review ESD's latest version of [FAQs](#). Other ways to keep abreast of the latest Opportunity Act news include the dedicated Opportunity Act web pages hosted by Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration ([DOLETA](#)), Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board ([WTECB](#)), and Employment Security Department ([ESD](#)). Partners may also receive periodic updates about ESD's Opportunity Act implementation activities in future editions of the [System Focus newsletter](#), and by subscribing to the new blog at [ESDOpportunityActNews.com](#) (coming soon).

Comment Period for Opportunity Act Proposed Rules Ends Soon

On April 21, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), in collaboration with Employment Security (ESD), issued a formal system-wide call for comments on the Opportunity Act proposed rules. Comments are due to the WTECB and ESD by close of business on May 4, 2105. The Board will meet on May 28 to consider all submitted comments before the Department of Labor's June 15 submission deadline. For more information, please consult the [WTECB's Opportunity Act proposed rules web page](#), or contact [Nova Gattman](#) at WTECB (360-709-4612) or [Gary Kamimura](#) at ESD (360-902-9751).

YouthWorks Program Update

Last Fall, the Governor announced the creation of the [YouthWorks program](#), a two-year, \$1.9 million initiative to provide internships and other work-based learning experiences for thousands of students across the state and help re-engage those who have dropped out or are at risk of not graduating from high school. Most of the 12 WDCs have contracts in place to connect youth to career readiness opportunities within local areas. To help ensure the long-term success of the program, ESD has hired Melissa Connaughton to oversee the program, provide technical assistance, collect promising practices. Melissa joins the agency on May 1 and can be reached then at mconnaughton@esd.wa.gov.



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Program for Disadvantaged Youth – Reflecting on the First Two Quarters

Washington Service Corps (WSC) and Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) teamed up again this program year (Sept. 2014-Aug. 2015) to continue to serve disadvantaged youth across the state, including those who are incarcerated, have dropped out of high school, and those receiving TANF benefits. This program is designed to help young adults gain positive traction in their lives. WSC AmeriCorps members placed with Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) provide training in workplace readiness and financial literacy, plus assist youths in getting their GED, preparing for or completing college and applying for jobs.

Last September, 19 AmeriCorps members were placed with 12 WDCs. By the end of February, 2,629 individuals had received job training or other skill development services through this program – already surpassing the program’s original year-end goal by 36%; 77 students entered post-secondary education institutions; 151 students earned a post-secondary degree; and 241 individuals found employment.

Second-quarter data shows the majority of the program’s goals are on track to be met or exceeded by the end of the program in August, and we’re excited to see the progress that third quarter data will reflect.

Federal Opportunity Act News

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) issued two new Opportunity Act-related Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) in April. [TEGL 26-14](#) provides guidance on the Opportunity Act transition authority for the flexible use of state Rapid Response funds for Opportunity Act transition activities while [TEGL 27-14](#) provides operating guidance on designating Opportunity Act-compliant state and local workforce development boards, designating local areas, and the timeframe for completing those activities.

In other news, on April 16, the federal Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee conducted an executive session to take up several [technical amendments](#) to the Opportunity Act to correct drafting errors. These included a change to the criteria for designating a local board as an alternate entity from the day before the date of enactment of the Opportunity Act to the day before the date of enactment of WIA, and another to correct the 90 percent hold-harmless language related to state allotments for the Opportunity Act Title I youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs. All technical amendment effective dates were made retroactive to one day after the enactment of the Opportunity Act. These are proposed technical amendments and they have not yet become federal law.

WCDD Celebrates Retirements, Welcomes New Staff

Two of WCDD’s esteemed colleagues celebrated their retirements as April came to an end. Judy Ok, long-time coordinator for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program in Washington, celebrated her 37-year long career with Employment Security as the WOTC program automation project hit a major milestone several years in the making. Roy Kauer III, Intensive Services Coordinator, leaves Employment Security after eight years coordinating with both ESD’s DVOPs and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment case managers around the state. We wish them both well on the next exciting phase of their lives. While both Judy and Roy will be missed, they have paved the way for their successors, Susan Haerling (WOTC) and Sarah Saenz (DVOP) to hit the ground running.

New Policy Guidance

[WIN 0056 Change 2:](#)
Lower Living Standard Income Level by Family Size

May 2015 Featured Events

None this month.



Please send us your feedback!

We want this newsletter to reflect our system and welcome your suggestions for future articles. Let us know what you’d like to see, or send us an article about something important to you! E-mail us at ESDGPWCDDTST@esd.wa.gov.